

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 AID-05 EB-07 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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R 261800Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7956

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1969

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, DM, NI, TO

SUBJ: VISIT OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO COTONOU

1. ON DEC 24 GOVT NEWSPAPER EHUZU REPORTED COTONOU VISIT PREVIOUS DAY OF NIGERIAN FORNMIN GARBA ACCOMPANIED BY THE INSPECTOR GEN OF THE NIGERIAN POLICE (YUSUF IS THE ONLY NAME GIVEN). GARBA IS SAID TO HAVE BROUGHT A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM NIGERIAN PRES TO PRES KEREKOU.

2. EHUZU'S ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING READS AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE... THE PROBLEM OF THE CLOSING OF THE FRONTIER BETWEEN THE PRB AND THE SISTER REPUBLIC OF TOGO WAS BROUGHT UP...CHIEF OS STATE KEREKOU INSISTED ON REAFFIRMING...THAT THE BORDERS OF THE PRB HAVE NEVER BEEN CLOSED TO ANY CITIZEN OF ANY BROTHER STATE OF OUR SUB-REGION. NEVERTHELESS FOR PROFOUND SECURITY REASONS IT HAD BEEN DECIDED AS JUST AND LEGITIMATE TO PROHIBIT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE BORDER CROSSINGS BY CITIZENS OF TOGO ONLY.

3. QUOTE; CONSEQUENTLY, COMRADE KEREKOU MADE CLEAR TO THE  
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NIGERIAN DEL THAT THE COMPENTENT TOGOLESE AUTHORITIES OUGHT

TO ADOPT, AS A RECIPROCAL MEASURE, THE SAME ATTITUDE TOWARD BENINESE CITIZENS ALONE, AND THUS PROVE THEIR GOOD FAITH TO THE CHIEFS OF STATE OF THE BROTHER PEOPLES OF OUR SUB-REGION, RATHER THAN TO PROMOTE CONFUSION EVERYWHERE BY EXTENDING THE CLOSING OF THEIR BORDERS INDISCRIMINATELY TO THE CITIZENS OF ALL BROTHER STATES. IN ANY CASE, PRB ITSELF HAS NEVER CLOSED ITS FRONTIERS TO ALL THE OTHER AFRICAN BROTHERS, FOR WHOM ITS BORDERS REMAIN COMPLETELY OPEN...PRET POUR LA REVOLUTION

\*

LA LUTTE CONTINUE\* UNQTE.

4. COMMENT: BELIEVE GARBA'S VISIT WAS RELATED TO VISIT WE UNDERSTAND EYADEMA MADE TO LAGOS PREVIOUS DAY, AT WHICH PRESUMABLY THE TOGO/BENIN BORDER ISSUE WAS ONE OF TOPICS. SUSPECT HOWEVER THAT THERE WERE AT LEAST TWO OTHER SUBJECTS ON AGENDA, ANGOLA AND SOME SECURITY MATTER. IN VIEW OF THE STAUNCH PRO-MPLA STANDS OF THE TWO GOVTS, THERE WAS PROBABLY LITTLE OR NO DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON ANGOLA.

5. PARTICIPATION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF NIGERIAN POLICE SUGGESTS THERE WAS AN ISSUE INVOLVING EITHER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE POLICE SERVICES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES OR PRB CLandestine ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT A FIVE-MAN PRB ARMED COMMANDO TEAM CARRIED OUT A RAID AGAINST THE PRB EMBASSY IN LAGOS IN BROAD DAYLIGHT ONE DAY IN MID-NOV AND ABDUCTED ABEL ZINSOU WITH THE INTENT TO BRING HIM TO BENIN (COTONOU 1789). THEY WERE EVENTUALLY CAPTURED BY NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEIR KIDNAP VICTIM DROVE THEM INTO A DITCH AND FLED. THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THIS COMMANDO UNIT WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE DEP CHIEF OF BENIN'S SURETE NATIONALE, VALERE KOUKOU. THERE ARE RUMORS IN COTONOU OF OTHER PRB ARMED OPERATIONS AGAINST BENIN NATIONALS INSIDE NIGERIA.

6. THE PRB'S CHARACTERIZATION OF ITS POSITION ON THE BORDER ISSUE IS MOSTLY FALSE. FOR SOME TIME AFTER OCT 19 LITERALLY NO ONE COULD GET INTO BENIN FROM THE WEST OR LEAVE IT FROM THE EAST. AT ONE TIME SEVERAL HUNDRED EASTBOUND TRAVELERS, MOSTLY CITIZENS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN TOGO, HAVING BEEN PROCESSED OUT OF THE TOGOLESE BORDER AUTHORITIES ON THE COAST-CONFIDENTIAL

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AL ROAD, WERE REFUSED ENTRY BY THE BENINESE AUTHORITIES. THEY HAD TO CAMP FOR SEVERAL DAYS BETWEEN THE TWO BORDER STATIONS; THERE WAS MUCH SUFFERING. FOR A BRIEF PERIOD (NOV 7-14) FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF GHANA'S FORNMIN TO COTONOU (COTONOU 1694), AFRICANS OTHER THAN BENINESE OR TOGOLESE WERE ALLOWED ACROSS BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER, BUT THIS PRACTICE CEASED WHEN TOGO AGAIN CLOSED ITS FRONTIER TO NATIONALS OF ALL COUNTRIES. IT WAS DURING THIS BRIEF INTERLUDE THAT THOSE STRANDED IN NO-MAN'S

LAND WERE ABLE TO PROCEED. SINCE MID-NOV, AND DESPITE BENINESE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, NO ONE HAS BEEN ALLOWED EVEN TO APPROACH THE BENINESE SIDE OF THE BORDER FROM THE EAST (COTONOU 1788).

7. BENINESE GOVT, DETERMINED TO KEEP TOGOLESE OUT, WILL GLADLY ACCEPT "RECIPROCITY". IT DOES NOT WANT ITS OWN NATIONALS TO LEAVE BENIN, ESPECIALLY EN ROUTE TO TOGO WHERE THEY CAN CONTACT THE EXILED OPPOSITION. AN AGREEMENT ON RECIPROCITY WILL IN FACT BE A TRIUMPH FOR KEREKOU, SINCE IT WILL HELP HIM ENFOCE HIS POPULATION CONTROL MEASURES. THIS GOVT HAS SHOWN NO CONCERN AT ALL FOR THE ECONOMIC OR OTHER HARDSHIPS CAUSED ITS NEIGHBORS BY THE BORDER CLOSURE. END COMMENT.  
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